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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9732
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
INFO RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEAWJB/DOJ WASHDC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7810

UNCLAS JAKARTA 001503

SIPDIS
UNCLASSIFIED

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, G/AIAG, L/DL, EAP/EX, AND OES/IHA
USAID FOR ANE/CLEMENTS AND GH/CARROLL
DEPT ALSO PASS TO HHS/WSTEIGER/MSTLOUIS AND HHS/NIH
DEPT ALSO PASS TO DOJ for OFL
GENEVA FOR WHO/HOHMAN
USDA/FAS/OSTA BRANT, ROSENBLUM
USDA/APHIS ANNELLI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [AMGT](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#) [KLIQ](#)

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA - ALLEGED AI OUTBREAK IN NORTH SUMATRA
LIKELY FALSE ALARM

¶1. (U) Recent press reports of a human avian influenza (AI) outbreak in North Sumatra appear to be unsubstantiated. The AFP released an article entitled "Bird Flu Outbreak in Indonesia Kills Three" on 6 August 2008. The article claims that three individuals from the Asahan district died, with another thirteen undergoing treatment for the malady. Bird flu was initially suspected because the illness and deaths came on the heels of a spate of poultry deaths. Conversations with administrators at Adam Malik Hospital and Asahan District Hospital, as well as public health officials, indicate that the individuals are probably suffering from another respiratory illness. According to the AI coordinator for northern Sumatra, the fact that the patients from the suspected cluster are improving with treatment all but guarantees that the cases are not AI. World Health Organization officers corroborate this finding.

¶2. (U) The Ministry of Health (MOH) has sent a rapid response team to the area to investigate. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) staff are participating on this team. Samples from those currently ill have been sent, but have yet to arrive at the Indonesian government's National Institute of Health Research and Development (NIHRD). No samples were collected from the deceased individuals (contrary to press reports, only two people are believed to have died) and they were not observed by trained medical personnel prior to death. It is unclear if samples have been collected from the poultry.

HUME